

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
BUREAU OF FISHERIES  
Seattle



October 24, 1925.

The Commissioner of Fisheries,  
Washington, D. C.

I herewith present the following general report covering fishing operations in the Alaska Peninsula Area for the season of 1925.

Respectfully submitted,

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FOREWORD:

From the packers standpoint the season was a poor one. The pack was smaller than the 1923 pack which was likewise a poor year for the operators. The salmon runs were all late in their migration through the Peninsula region and only those operators who remained late in the season succeeded in making anything like a normal catch.

The year was marked by no unusual features. The spring was, perhaps, a little more backward than usual while the summer, once it arrived, was noteworthy for its lack of severe storms and heavy winds. Very little loss of gear was suffered by the packers in the district due to these causes.

An additional boat, chartered by the Bureau, together with a larger force of stream-guards made possible a more diligent and comprehensive patrol of fishing areas. These also afforded a more thorough survey of the various salmon propagating grounds of the District.

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OUTSTANDING FISHING FEATURES:

One new trap was driven in the district during the season. This was the Halfway Rock trap of the Shumigan Packing Company. The trap did quite well for a poor year, and should do much better in a good season.

Two other trap locations in the district were moved and their catch efficiency increased. The first of these was the Louisiana Cove trap, of the Pacific American Fisheries, which was relocated about one mile nearer Ikatan Bay than before, and driven partially in the lee of a protective reef. The other trap belonged to the P.E.Harris Company which was originally driven in East Anchor Cove and was shifted slightly to permit of a more effective lead.

Discouraged by indications of meager runs, The Pacific American Fisheries cannery at Ikatan closed down a month early with but a small portion of their normal pack and sailed for home. For the same reason The P.E.Harris Company cannery, operating at False Pass, followed suit a few days later, having but one-half a pack. On August fifteenth, a week after the Harris Company had left, a very large run of Dog salmon was in progress in the waters fished by these canneries, followed shortly thereafter by a fine run of Silvers. While this premature desertion of the district was a loss to these operators it resulted in an unusually large seasonal spawning escapement.

CANNERIES OPERATED:

Six canneries were operated in the Alaska Peninsula Area this season, they being as follows:

Port Moller,	operated by the Pacific American Fisheries
Ikatan,	" " " "
King Cove,	" " " "
False Pass,	" " " P. E. Harris & Co.
Squaw Harbor	" " " Shumigan Packing Co.
Herendeen Bay	" " " Everett Packing Co.

The following canneries were not operated this season:

Herendeen Bay plant, of the Phoenix Packing Co.  
Herendeen Bay plant, of the Fidalgo Packing Co.  
Nelson's Lagoon plant, of the Pacific American Fisheries.

### NEW CANNERIES:

As was the case last season there was considerable talk this summer of other companies entering the Peninsula field the coming year. Chris Hale and the P.E. Harris Company, both well known packers are rumored to be considering locations in the Shumigan Islands region. The entrance of new operators in this district will undoubtedly place a heavier strain on the migrating runs. Whether they can stand an added drain is the big question for the Bureau and packers to determine.

### SALMON RUNS:

There are two distinct salmon runs in the Peninsular Region, the "local" runs and the "migrating" runs.

Migrating salmon run from late May until early September. The schools appear first in the vicinity of the Shumigan Islands and work westward, making their appearance in the Ikatan and Morzhovoi Bays region a week to ten days later. Other movements of this migrating run are inexplicable and vary from year to year. The migrating Dogs and Kings appeared first this year followed by the Reds, which, in turn, were followed by the main run of Dogs. Later in the season the Silvers appeared. While the Silver run was in progress another and smaller run of Reds appeared. A few of these last were picked up in the East Anchor Cove trap of the P.E. Harris Company in the first days of August. The Pacific American Fisheries Company of King Cove also made fair catches of Reds throughout the month of August in their Nickolosky Spit trap. These fish were large and their meat a very deep red. Fresh from the sea and very active they were apparently bound for some remote stream along the Alaskan or Siberian shores.

The "local" runs are made up of fish which find their parent streams in the Peninsula region. They do not follow any known route, but work with the "migrating" runs and find their way to the various spawning areas along the Peninsula. These runs are composed of Dogs, Humpbacks, Reds and Silvers. The writer has no knowledge of King salmon spawning in the Peninsula region although they are reported to ascend one or two of the short rivers emptying into the Bering Sea in the vicinity of Port Moller.

### THIS SEASON'S RUNS:

The runs this season entered the Alaska Peninsula waters late. This was true of both the "migrating" runs and the

"local" runs. Throughout the season, from the Shumigans on the South side of the Peninsula to Port Moller on the North side, the runs hung from a week to ten days behind schedule and were weak and of short duration. They appeared suddenly, and when prospects for a good run seemed likely, dwindled away to nothing.

For the foregoing reasons no plant succeeded in securing a pack equal to that of the year previous when the regulations limiting the amount of pack were lifted. The Everett Packing Company of Everett, Washington, put up the smallest pack. The Ikatan cannery of the Pacific American Fisheries of South Bellingham was second low cannery and as stated, left the district early in the season. Port Moller of the same company came third, and the P.E.Harris Company of Seattle, Washington, was fourth.

The Shumigan Packing Company, at Squaw Harbor, put up the best pack in the district. They secured over seventy one thousand cases of which over twenty eight thousand were Reds or forty per cent. Their pack was more nearly similar to the pack of the preceeding years, than any other operator in the district.

The runs of Dogs and Humpbacks, especially the latter, were similar to the runs of 1923, their volume being about the same as far as could be determined from the operations of the packers. They were much later this season than last, however, as heretofore noticed.

In the Shumigan Islands the Dogs, after the run once appeared, continued fairly well throughout the season. The belated run of Dogs in Bear Bay was very strong and enabled the King Cove cannery to keep a short crew packing the catch from this bay alone. Late in the season this same plant did very well with beach seines. One of these seines was operated by the crew of the gas boat Louisiana, and the other by the natives of Belkofsky. The greater part of the fish were taken in King Cove, Belkofsky Bay and in Left Hand Corner, about two miles from Thin Point in the direction of Morzhovoi Bay.

The run of Silvers was very good. The operators, secured more than in any season past and the fish were still running in large numbers when packing ceased.



CATCH STRAIN:

The strain of catch placed on the runs in the Alaska Peninsula region this season was not great. Closed seasons seemed to conspire against the operators while the storms which visited the region insisted on putting in an appearance during Open Season and hindered operations to some extent. This was especially true in the Port Moller and Herendeen Bay region where winds and high seas played havoc with the seiners. The early departure of some of the packers also reduced the demand on the runs.

RUN CONSERVATION:

Little, if anything new, can be said on this vital subject. Likely no fishing should be permitted in the Alaska Peninsula Area between September first and fifteenth. During this time the local runs of Dogs and Humpbacks are in a condition unfit for human consumption. They are poor and many of them attacked by fungi due to their long stay in brackish water off the stream mouths.

Owing to the intensity of the runs in several localities, notably Ikatan and Morzhovoi Bays and the vicinity of Kelly Rock, the distance between traps should be lengthened from eighteen hundred feet to one mile. This regulation will not be hard to accomplish at present as the traps of the several companies do not seriously conflict at the present time. Should it be postponed until a later date the fishing will be more intense, new operators will have entered the field and the situation will present a problem similar to that of Southeastern Alaska. At the present time in the Alaska Peninsula Area, fishing is mostly confined to Ikatan Bay, Morzhovoi Bay, the vicinity of Kelly Rock and in the region of the Bear and Sandy rivers.

The regulation of traps to a mile distant, would not affect the Bear and Sandy rivers fishing, as but one trap is driven there at present. In the vicinity of Kelly Rock in the Shumigan region, trap fishing is carried on by one company. They secure from four traps in this immediate vicinity all the fish for the operation of this plant. In Ikatan Bay fishing is followed by two companies, one of which operates four and the other five traps. In Morzhovoi Bay the fishing is carried on by one company which operates four traps.

All but one or two of these traps are less than one mile apart. In the same localities several of the traps are just far enough apart to prohibit construction of an additional trap between them and in one or two instances the traps are just over the present eighteen hundred foot limit prescribed by the present law. In all instances, dummy traps are driven to hold locations. If these are taken into consideration distances between traps in fishing areas in Ikatan Bay and Morzhovoi Bay are always less than thirty six hundred feet and as before mentioned often just over the eighteen hundred feet prescribed by law. This results in a heavy drain on the migrating run as well as a drain on the operator who drives some of the traps for the protection of good fishing locations.

If the limit were placed at one mile it would eliminate one location in Morzhovoi Bay, one in the vicinity of Kelly Rock, and three in the vicinity of Ikatan Bay, not to mention several dummy locations which are at present taking some fish from year to year.

If this distance is lengthened to a mile between traps, the season should be lengthened, that is to say, the closed period should be shortened, except in Port Moller where the runs are local in character and greatly overfished already. The elimination of several traps will noticeably cut down the fishing efficiency of the various plants. Other locations are not available in all instances and those available are not as efficient as the present ones. Instead of the sixty hours, imposed by the present law the closed season should be reduced to the original thirty-six as in Bristol Bay and also as it is in the Peninsula region during the latter part of the season. This will curtail the catch noticeably in the places above mentioned, where fishing at the present time is of an intensive nature.

#### STREAM IMPROVEMENT:

Stream improvement operations were carried out largely along the lines followed last year. The various streams of the Peninsula were visited from time to time by the two patrol boats of the Bureau. Where streams were found to contain barriers obstructing the ascent of salmon they were removed. Owing to the climatic conditions in the Alaska Peninsula the work of stream improvement remains only for the duration of the calm spell during which the improvement is effected. For this reason work was not attempted until fish were observed waiting off the stream mouths to ascend to the spawning grounds when it would be of value.

#### LAGOON FISHING:

There was very little lagoon fishing in the Alaska

Peninsula Area this past season. Thin Point was closed, markers erected and a watchman stationed there during the important portion of the season. Kinzaroff's and Mortenson's Lagoons also escaped molestation, being in the closed area of Cold Bay. Swanson's Lagoon was fished only a small portion of the season owing to the weather conditions and tides in Bering Sea.

Undoubtedly the lagoons in the Peninsula region can stand some fishing and the nature of the weather affords them considerable protection. It must be remembered nevertheless that during calm spells fishermen can and do enter lagoons open to fishing and make good catches. This is due to the fact that the salmon after entering the lagoons play about for many days before the tides are of sufficient height to enable them to reach the creeks entering the lagoon. As the season advances and the fish entering the lagoons are more mature, they color up more rapidly and are then not in a proper condition for canning. In fact the operators have a special mark for cans designating such fish and they are sold as an inferior product. For this reason if none other, the fishing in lagoons should be discouraged.

Fishing is already prohibited in all salmon streams and a lagoon should be classed as a salmon stream. It is entered by streams at one end and by tides at the other which comingle over a series of flats and channels to form the lagoon. It is very much similar to large flats found here and there in some rivers where, owing to the topography of the country, the stream becomes sluggish and flows over a large area in many channels.

#### SALMON ESCAPEMENTS:

An estimate of the escapement of the migrating runs of salmon would be of no value owing to the many chances for error. It may be said here, however, that the migrating runs did not this season strike into Ikatan and Morzhovoi Bays in their usual numbers. The P.E.Harris Company trap at East Anchor Cove and the Pacific American Fisheries trap slightly below Ikatan Point outside of Ikatan Bay, caught fish consistently when the traps in Ikatan and Morzhovoi Bay were hardly fishing at all.

The traps of the Shumigan Packing Company at Squaw Harbor, did likewise, their pack report showing twenty eight thousand five hundred Reds of a total pack of seventy one thousand cases or approximately forty per cent. The average pack of Reds for the southern side of the Peninsula was only thirty three per cent. This is including the figures of the Ikatan and False Pass canneries, both of which left early and whose percentage

of Reds would have decreased daily. The only other plant which packed as long as Squaw Harbor was the King Cove plant. Their pack of Reds was fifteen per cent, their traps in Morzhovoi Bay failing completely.

Reports of the escapement to the local streams have been pretty well covered in the semi-monthly reports but a short resume may not be out of place here.

Thin Point, Kinzaroff and Swanson lagoons enjoyed a normal escapement of spawning Red salmon. That is to say, the spawning areas in these three streams were seeded to their capacity. The spawning lakes at the head of the Red Cove, Johnny Nelson and Orzenoi streams were moderately seeded. They likely could have absorbed more of a run but were not overfished.

The lake in Acheridin Bay did not have a good escapement. This however, was not due to overfishing as the operators in the district did practically no fishing at Acheridin Bay, owing to the exposed condition of the fishing grounds.

Lambsports Lagoon in Morzhovoi Bay had a poor escapement of salmon. This was likely due to the poor run of the present season and to the fact that the lagoon is blocked on both sides by long traps, the nearest one being a little under a mile from the lagoon mouth.

The Bear and Sandy River spawning beds have been covered in a special report.

The other streams of the Peninsula are ascended mainly by Dog and Humpback salmon. This was an off year for Humpbacks in the Alaska Peninsula. Few of them were noticed in the streams of this area. The Dog salmon were present in large schools, however, and all the streams of the Alaska Peninsula, up which this variety runs, were well seeded.

During the early part of the season the streams of Morzhovoi Bay and False Pass experienced no run of Dogs of any value. After the canneries left, as noted elsewhere in this report, the Dogs appeared in large numbers and the streams in Morzhovoi Bay and False Pass were full by the latter part of August and early September. Silvers were running in September, to, and the escapement of this species into the streams of the Peninsula, which it was possible to visit was found to be good. Local inhabitants reported a large escapement of Dogs and Silvers in places visited by them, such as trapping grounds and native fishing villages.

FOX FARMERS:

According to all reports the fox farmers of the Peninsula region secured enough fish for their needs.

SALMON WASTE:

There was no fish waste in the district. Cannerymen at no time were swamped with fish, the operators running at half capacity the most of the season.

VISITORS:

During the season the Peninsula Area was visited in the interests of salmon conservation by The Commissioner of Fisheries, Hon. Henry O'Malley. He was accompanied by Mr. Richey, of the Department of Commerce, and Representatives Free and White.

PATROL:

A patrol of the Peninsula waters was maintained by the Bureau of Fisheries with two boats, the Auk chartered for the purpose and the Merganser already assigned to the district. The Merganser covered the Shumigan Islands and vicinity and the Auk maintained a patrol of the remaining waters.

In the districts patrolled all fish traps were visited as often as time and weather would permit, during closed seasons, and the bays and stream mouths were kept under surveillance throughout the entire season.

TRAPS:

Twenty-three full size traps were driven in the Alaska Peninsula Area this season. This was a decrease of four over last season. The reason for this decrease was the certain knowledge of the packers that the Humpback run would not materialize, this being the off year for that species, and the traps being located in Humpback localities.

PURSE SEINES:

Ten purse seines and four half purse seines were used in the Alaska Peninsula. All of the full purse seines were used in the Port Moller region. The half purse seines were all operated in the Shumigan Islands and vicinity.

BEACH SEINES:

A few beach seines were used in the district. It was impossible to secure a close check on the number as they were principally operated by local residents in securing their winter supply of salmon and by the fox farmers for securing fox feed. Those used for commercial purposes were:

- One at Orzenoi River, operated by Gus Lindquist.
- One at King Cove, operated by the Belkofsky natives.
- One at King Cove, operated by the P. A. F.
- One at False Pass, operated by the Morzhovoi natives.
- One at Swanson Lagoon, operated by the P. E. Harris Co.

PROHIBITIVE MONUMENTS:

Prohibitive monuments were erected five hundred yards from the mouths of all streams in the Peninsula Area where fishing operations were conducted.

The stenciling of markers for next year was undertaken during the latter part of the season after the arrival of the stencil. Markers will be erected on all streams in this district before the opening of the salmon fishing season next year.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The purchase of a sturdy sea-worthy boat with sufficient power for patrolling and cruising purposes, and a speed of not less than nine knots.
2. Lengthening the distance between fish traps from eighteen hundred feet to one mile.
3. A return to the original closed season of thirty-six hours.
4. The adoption of some feasible plan for enlarging the spawning escapement ascending the Bear and Sandy Rivers.
5. Establishment of a fishing reservation for the benefit of the Belkofsky natives.